



# OCTOBER 2008

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Dearhearts,

There was a famous Roman general named Marius, whose equally famous soldiers were renowned not only for their fighting qualities, but their marching ability. They not only marched steadily covering long distances, but they also carried most of their equipment on their backs, which eliminated the need for a long, slow, vulnerable train of wagons trailing out behind them. In fact, some of their victories were attributed to their ability to outmarch their opponents. These hardy foot soldiers were known as “Marius’ mules.”

There was a time when the church took pride in its marching ability. “Like a mighty army moves the Church of God,” says the old hymn. “Brothers we are treading where the saints have trod.” Be that as it may, it seems we are about to get new marching orders telling us to break camp and get on the road. Bishop Whitaker has asked the clergy to meet with him in Lakeland, on October 14, to hear his vision of our direction and goals for the next four years. At the same time, the Board of Lay Ministries, under the direction of our new Conference Lay Leader, Sharon Luther, and her Associate Lay Leader, Russ Graves, are preparing to carry the same message to the laity.

Now the road we are taking is called the Methodist Way, but there are a number of more specific goals to be achieved. It is these objectives that we need to understand from the beginning and will be hearing about in a few weeks. As for myself, I not only appreciate clear direction, I have also come to appreciate the opportunity to march alongside one of the boldest and most caring strategists in the Council of Bishops. I guess that makes me one of Whitaker’s Mules.

So, I will see my clergy colleagues at First United Methodist Church of Lakeland on Tuesday, October 14, at 11:00 AM. And I will look forward to announcing how the word will be passed along to my laity friends as well.

Grace and Peace,

*Rich*

## Calendar

### October

- 3 & 4 UMWIM Team Leader Training at Lakewood UMC  
Jacksonville, FL
- 4 UMW - District Annual Meeting 10 a.m.  
Memorial UMC—Fernandina Beach, FL
- 4 & 11 Lay Speaking Classes at First UMC --Starke
- 7 Mentor Training - Peace UMC in Orlando, FL
- 14 Bishop's Convocation at First UMC, Lakeland
- 23 Membership Growth Retreat  
Life Enrichment Center -- Leesburg, FL
- 24 Radical Hospitality Event  
Bradenton, FL
- 25 Radical Hospitality Event  
Lakeland, FL

### November

- 1 UMW Conference Annual Meeting  
Lakeland, FL
- 1 Radical Hospitality Event  
West Palm Beach, FL
- 6 Open Enrollment for Benefit Plan --Live Web cast 10 a.m.  
Open enrollment begins Nov. 3-14
- 9 UMW President & Pastors Tea  
First UMC Downtown Jacksonville
- 11 Veterans Day -- Office Closed
- 17 SPRC Training -- Southside UMC from 7-8:30p.m.  
Jacksonville, FL
- 20 SPRC Training -- St. James UMC from 7-8:30p.m.  
Palatka, FL
- 27 & 28 Thanksgiving Day -- Office Closed
- 30 United Methodist Student Day -- contact Kelly Moore  
kmoore@flumc.org or call 800-282-8011 ext. 142

**For more information refer to your calendar of reports due.  
Found at [www.flumc.org](http://www.flumc.org) under the calendar tab.**



# FROM KATHY'S CORNER

Charge Conference season will soon be upon us and I know most of you are diligently working to get your forms into our office by the October 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. Checklist Item #18 Local Church Officers Mailing List is due two weeks after your Charge Conference but in no event later than November 30, 2008. If you do not have Excel capabilities or are having trouble downloading the information, please contact the District Office. We'll be glad to help you or provide a hard copy of the form if necessary.

Even though the year is nearly over, some churches are still inquiring about 2008 bills for Property & Casualty insurance, Worker's Compensation insurance, Health and Pension benefits and Apportionment Reports. Last year the Conference made the decision to go to online billing and reporting. All of the above information is now available from the Conference website ([www.flumc.org](http://www.flumc.org)). In the lower right hand corner is a square box indicating "Billing Info". Click on this box and using your GCFA number you will be able to access any of the billing information. Don't know your GCGA number? The District Office will be glad to assist you.

Once Charge Conference season ends, it won't be long until Year End Statistical Reports will be due. With the elimination of the Pastor's Report from the Charge Conference forms, it is now necessary to maintain only one set of membership records based on the calendar year. You should begin gathering the membership information for 2008 so that the information will be available early in January. One item that has caused some confusion the last few years relates to the "Total baptized members who have not become professing members." Prior to the 2004 Discipline, this was referred to as the "Preparatory Roll" which consisted of those persons who had been baptized but had not made a profession of faith and become full members. This list usually consists primarily of infants/children who have received the sacrament of baptism but have not yet been through confirmation class or otherwise made a profession of faith. This list is cumulative from year to year with additions being made for newly baptized members and deletions made for persons who have made a confession of faith and become full members or transferred. The Year End Report also asks for the "Number of persons baptized this year (all ages)". This represents exactly what it says. Very often I see the "number baptized this year" is identical to the "total baptized members" which should be a very rare occurrence. As the membership audit is conducted the list of Total baptized members who have not become professing members should be maintained/updated. Please review your membership rolls to be sure that you are properly maintaining your lists. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

## UMVIM Team Leader Training

If you're ready to take your leadership skills to the next level, UMVIM Team Leader Training prepares volunteers to lead Mission Teams domestically or overseas. The training dates are Oct. 3 and 4th at Lakewood UMC in Jacksonville located at 6133 San Jose Blvd.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Sue Macchiarella at [sue@jesusatcovenant.org](mailto:sue@jesusatcovenant.org) or call Pam Garrison [pgarrison@flumc.org](mailto:pgarrison@flumc.org) or call (800) 282-8011 ext. 148

## Mentor Training

There will be Mentor Training on Tuesday, October 7, 2008 at Peace UMC in Orlando, FL From 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Please register by calling Carole Rooks at 727-595-2681 or email [carole.rooks@flumc.org](mailto:carole.rooks@flumc.org) — There is no registration fee for this training



You are cordially invited to a very special OPEN HOUSE at DLC Nurse & Learn, Inc.  
Thursday, October 9, 2008 5:00-7:00p.m.

Come meet the teachers, therapists, nurses and board members that make DLC a Great place for kids of all abilities. See website at [dlcni.org](http://dlcni.org) for more information.

### **October 14 - Florida Conference Convocation of the Clergy**

Bishop Timothy W. Whitaker has announced that all clergy members of the Florida Conference are asked to attend Convocation of the Clergy on Tuesday, **October 14, 2008** at the First UMC in Lakeland, 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. The purpose of the Convocation will be to present to the clergy the agenda for the Florida Conference including goals and expectations of all congregations and clergy, for 2009-2012.



The purpose of the Florida Conference online learning ministry is to give opportunities for leaders in local congregations to gain information. It is one of many tools needed to be a knowledgeable leader. For more information go to [flumc.org](http://flumc.org) website to the e-learning icon shown here.

### **Life Enrichment Center begins room renovations with “new tile floors”.**

In an effort to reduce mold and mildew in the overnight rooms at the LEC, they are tiling floors, one room at a time. Last month we had an opportunity to preview the first renovated room and it was beautiful – new tile floor, new paint, new furniture, pictures on the wall. Simple and clean – very refreshing. They have one room complete and the second underway. The plan is to manage this project “one room at a time” as donations come in to support it. If you or a group in your local church would like to participate in this project, it costs under \$1,000 to remodel one room...and they will accept donations of any amount. Contact Rev. Jess L. Schload, LEC Director for more information on how you can participate. [jschload@flumc.org](mailto:jschload@flumc.org)  
352-787-0313.



**Thanks to everyone who turned in their  
Charge Conference Forms  
before the October 1st deadline  
Keep them coming**

# Charge Conference Schedule 2008

## Cluster 1

**Held at Memorial UMC on Sunday, October 12 at 2:30pm**  
First Jax, Franklinton, Memorial, Mt. Moriah, Southside, Trinity

## Cluster 2

**Held at Garden City UMC on Sunday, October 12 at 7pm**  
Ebenezer, First-Callahan, Garden City, Highlands, New Life, Wesley Fellowship, Yulee

## Cluster 3

**Held at Glynlea Grace UMC on Sunday, October 26 at 7pm**  
Faith, Glynlea Grace, Spring Glen, Swaim

## Cluster 4

**Held at Grace UMC, Lawtey on Sunday, November 2 at 7pm**  
Baldwin/Bryceville, First-Macclenny, First-Starke, Grace-Lawtey, Pleasant Grove

## Cluster 5

**Held at Avondale UMC on Sunday, November 9 at 2:30pm**  
Asbury-Orange Park, Avondale, First-Green Cove Springs, Fleming Island, Orange Park, Ortega, Middleburg

## Cluster 6

**Held at Lakewood UMC on Sunday, November 9 at 7pm**  
Beach, Christ-Neptune Beach, CrossRoad, Isle of Faith, Lakewood, Mandarin

## Cluster 7

**Held at Good Shepherd UMC on Sunday, October 19 at 7pm**  
Christ-St. Augustine, Dinsmore, Good Shepherd, Harmony, Oak Leaf, Ponte Vedra, River of Life

## Cluster 8

**Held at Oak Crest UMC on Sunday, November 23 at 2:30pm**  
Asbury-Jax, Calvary. Lake Shore, Murray Hill, Oak Crest, Wesconnett, Woodstock Park

## Cluster 9

**Held at Ft. Caroline UMC on Sunday, October 26 at 2:30pm**  
Alexander Memorial, Arlington, Ft. Caroline, Mt. Zion, St. Joseph, St. Paul

## Cluster 10

**Held at Trinity UMC, Jacksonville on Sunday, October 19 at 2:30pm**  
Bowden, Inman Memorial, Simpson Memorial, Trinity

## Cluster 11

**Held at Shores UMC, St. Augustine on Sunday, October 5 at 2:30pm**  
First-St. Augustine, Grace-St. Augustine, Shores, Trinity-St. Augustine

## Cluster 12

**Held at Keystone UMC on Sunday, November 2 at 2:30pm**  
First-Lake Butler, Florahome, Greater Bell. Keystone, Worthington Springs

## Cluster 13

**Held at St. James UMC on Sunday, November 16 at 7pm**  
Christ-Riverdale, Emmanuel, First-Interlachen, St. James, St. Stephens, Trinity

## Cluster 14

**Held at Howe Memorial UMC on Sunday, November 16 at 2:30pm.**  
Welaka, Georgetown, Howe Memorial, Community

# OPEN ENROLLMENT

Annual Open Enrollment for The Florida Conference benefit plans is right around the corner. Some of the news is good; some of the news is less than good.

First, the good news. Those participants in the retiree category will see their premiums reduced by either 13 or 29 percent, depending which of two new plans they choose. The Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits made the decision to change providers for **retirees only** in 2009. United Healthcare Options PPO and Secure Horizons/Medicare Complete HMO will cease providing benefits to retirees on December 31, 2008. The new medical insurance plans offered in 2009 will be underwritten by Sterling Life Insurance Company, an "A" rated insurance carrier. National Employee Benefit Companies, Inc. (NEBCO), an AmWINS Group Benefits operating company, will provide administration for the new plans. A communications campaign is underway for retirees to help them understand the changes and make decisions for 2009.

Now, the less-than-good news: active clergy will see their contribution rates climb in 2009, with clergy paying 28 percent more per month than in 2008. Clergy will pay 20 percent of the overall premium; churches or other entities will pay the remaining 80 percent. The so-called "blended rate" for clergy serving local churches will be \$839 per month in 2009. The single rate for clergy will be \$96 and the family rate will be \$236 per month. All 2009 health insurance premium rates are listed on the Conference website at [www.flumc.org/hr](http://www.flumc.org/hr). Click the link for "health, dental, pharmacy, FSA and life insurance benefits" – then choose 2009 benefit rates.

The reason for the significant increase in participant contributions for 2009 is related to the action taken by the Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits (CBOPHB) last year. In order to keep the 2008 premium increase to about seven percent, the CBOPHB authorized the use of reserve funds to subsidize the rates. In 2009, that subsidy will not exist. Because the conference has had a very good year in terms of medical insurance claims, the CBOPHB felt that 2009 would be a good time to "catch up" for the rate subsidies of 2008.

Everyone who participates in Conference benefits is invited to view the live Open Enrollment webcast on **Thursday, Nov. 6, at 10 a.m.** sharp. Understanding your benefit plan is critical to your receiving the maximum benefits. To view the webcast, visit [www.flumc.org](http://www.flumc.org) on that day and click on the appropriate button. Please make sure you encourage lay employees at your church view the webcast who are also participating in the plan.

The 2009 benefit plan for active participants continues to provide a comprehensive, quality medical insurance plan for participants and their families. There will be no change in carriers for active participants (United Healthcare, CompBenefits, Discovery Benefits, Minnesota Life) and the plan of benefits will maintain the current co-pays for doctor's visits, deductibles and out of pocket maximums, which limit participants overall financial exposure. If you are currently enrolled in United Healthcare and make no changes for 2009 – you **will not** receive new ID cards.

## Highlights:

- The Open Enrollment period begins on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and ends on November 14, 2008.
- Open Enrollment information will be sent to current participants home addresses the week of October 13<sup>th</sup>
- Live Open Enrollment webcast **Thursday, Nov. 6, at 10 a.m.** sharp
- Participants must re-enroll in the Health-care Spending Account and Dependent Childcare Account every year - these benefit elections **do not** roll-over from year to year
- All Clergy and lay employees at local churches must print their confirmation statement upon completion of the open enrollment session and provide a copy to their financial administrator/payroll clerk to set up 2009 benefit payroll deductions.
- New benefit elections will be effective January 1, 2009.

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Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors  
The People of the United Methodist Church

# United Methodist Student Day - Nov. 30

## A Student's story

"In five years, I hope to be a college graduate, living in Central or South America and teaching English. In 10 years, I hope to be settled down and working for a nonprofit organization that deals with international aid."

Amanda Shafer of Miami is in her first year at High Point (N.C.) University, but she already has her life mapped out. Focusing on nonprofit human relations and Spanish, Shafer is involved in Amnesty International Club, Campus Crusade for Christ, Chapel Choir and Spanish Club, and volunteers with an organization that places immigrants in her community. With such a busy schedule, this young woman who has "attended the Florida Annual Conference every year" of her life is grateful for generous gifts made possible through offerings received on United Methodist Student Day.

Your gifts on United Methodist Student Day, Nov. 30, prepare students to unite faith with knowledge.

Each year, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry awards scholarships and loans to students attending United Methodist and other accredited colleges and universities through the United Methodist Student Day offering. In addition, a portion of the United Methodist Student Day offering is returned to each Annual Conference for merit scholarship awards to students of its choosing.

**Shafer is one such recipient and she is very thankful for the support.** "Everyone deserves the opportunity to discover him or herself and become the best person they can be. I wish I could thank every donor personally!"

For many students, financial assistance is critical to attaining higher education. Each year the number of applicants continues to rise, furthering the need for more financial assistance. Imagine being able to provide assistance for every one. That is the goal of United Methodist Student Day.

What would Shafer tell someone who wasn't sure about giving to an offering that provides scholarships and loans? "Pray—and look back on your college days and remember how formational they were: the dreams you dreamed, the decisions you made about who you wanted to be, the love you gave and the people you met who helped form you into who you are today," she said.

Every year, the news is the same: "tuition costs are increasing." For many United Methodist students, the continuous increase places an enormous financial burden that many cannot assume. However, through the United Methodist Student Day offering, you can help prepare students to unite faith with knowledge.

Please give generously. Thank you!

Information and support materials about United Methodist Student Day can be found at: [http://www.umcgiving.org/site/c.qwL6KkNWLrH/b.3595593/k.A832/Special\\_Sundays.htm](http://www.umcgiving.org/site/c.qwL6KkNWLrH/b.3595593/k.A832/Special_Sundays.htm)  
Just click on the United Methodist Student Day link on the left hand side of the page.

For further information about this Special Sunday or on scholarships offered by the UMC please contact Kelly Moore at [kmoore@flumc.org](mailto:kmoore@flumc.org) or call 800-282-8011, Ext 142.